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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS BAGHDAD 000181

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STATE FOR NEA/I

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [MARR](#) [PINS](#) [ODIP](#) [OFDP](#) [PREL](#) [KS](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: KOREAN INTEREST IN REGIONAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS

REF: 05 Baghdad 4045

¶1. (U) This is an action request; please see para 2.

¶2. (SBU) SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST: Korean Ambassador to Iraq Ki-ho Chang told the Ambassador January 19 that Seoul is interested in participating in, and possibly leading, the planned Kurdistan Regional Reconstruction Team (RRT). Chang asked that the USG formally request Korean participation in the RRT by letter. Post is following up with a proposed text for transmission via Embassy Seoul. We kindly request that the Department ask Embassy Seoul to approach the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs directly on this issue to stress the value that ROK participation in the RRT would have for our common effort in Iraq. END SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST.

¶3. (SBU) In a January 19 meeting with the Ambassador and Strategic Governance and Economic Effects Director Speckhard, Chang reaffirmed the ROK commitment to Iraq and expressed his government's interest in participating in the planned Erbil-based Regional Reconstruction Team (RRT), which would also cover the provinces of Dahuk and Sulamaniyah. Chang highlighted that no decision had been made in Seoul on participation in the RRT Erbil. Although he is personally supportive of ROK participation, Chang said, a formal decision and authorization from Seoul would be required prior to any further commitment. He suggested that the USG, as a way of prompting a decision, send a letter to his government requesting its participation.

¶4. (SBU) During follow-on discussion with Director Speckhard, Chang sought information regarding other Coalition participation in Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)/RRTs, especially that of the United Kingdom. While remaining non-committal, Chang asked questions related to potential roles for the ROK to include leadership of the PRT and provision of movement security teams. Additionally, he asked about the availability of funds both for the operation of the RRT and for reconstruction and development projects.

KHALILZAD